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FEB 25 2011

Federal Communications Commission
Office of the Secretary

North Carolina General Assembly

February 24, 2011

Chairman Julius Genachowski
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

Re: Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service Lifeline and Link Up
CC Docket No. 96-45; WC Docket 03-109

Dear Chairman Genachowski,

We write today to commend the efforts of the Federal-State Joint Board on Universal Service and Lifeline and Link Up. As we are sure you agree, we believe the Lifeline program provides an invaluable service to low-income constituents in our districts and across the country. We are glad the Board has decided to look for ways to minimize fraud, waste and abuse in the program so that deserving and qualified families will still have access to this important program.

As our nation struggles to overcome unemployment and other economic challenges, the Lifeline program is more invaluable than ever. Reports both academic and anecdotal have shown that access to phone service leads to greater chances of employment. Our districts' and our nation's residents should be able to access these services in the case of an emergency.

We agree wholeheartedly with the Board's recommendation that the Commission put together a plan for uniformity on areas that would apply to all Eligible Telecommunications Carriers (ETCs) to help eliminate waste and abuse in this program. In doing so, however, we want to make sure that low-income support of the fund remains strong. Because this program is so beneficial to our district's residents, our hope is it remains accessible and free to those who qualify.

Low-income support is cyclical and this should be acknowledged. As you may be aware, unemployment has remained above 9.5% for the last two years and those eligible for SNAP assistance has grown more rapidly in North Carolina than in the majority of other states. In these challenging economic times, programs such as Lifeline have a real and tangible impact on the lives of our constituents and we would like the Commission to recognize this, as we believe they do. As this recession begins to recede, the number of those eligible for Lifeline should also drop accordingly.


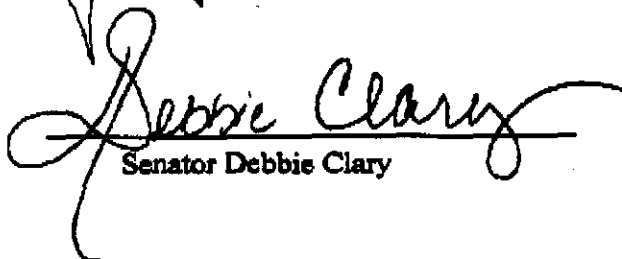
We urge the Commission to adopt the recommendations from the Federal-State Joint Board, as we would like to see these programs sustained in the short and long-term. Our only concern is that the

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Commission should not adopt policies that cap funding for low-income support or hinder competition in an already underserved market. For example, the FCC should not mandate (even minimal) monthly subscriber fees for Lifeline users, which would present an undue administrative burden on both carriers and consumers. The best approach to curtailing fraud and abuse is establishment of an eligibility database.

Thank you for your service to our constituents and this country. We look forward to seeing your proposed changes to strengthen these vital programs.

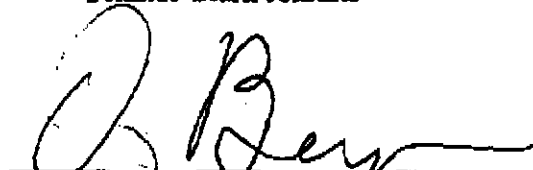
Sincerely,


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Senator Don Vaughan
Senator William Purcell
Senator David Rouzer
Senator Louis Pate
Senator Brent Jackson
Senator Bob Atwater
Senator Jerry Tiffin
Senator Austin Allran
Senator Debbie Clary
Senator Michael Walters



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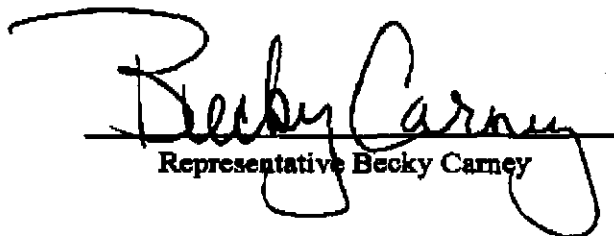

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Representative Pricey Harrison

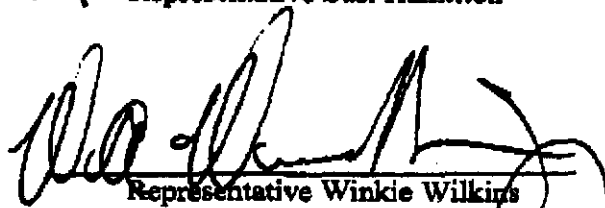

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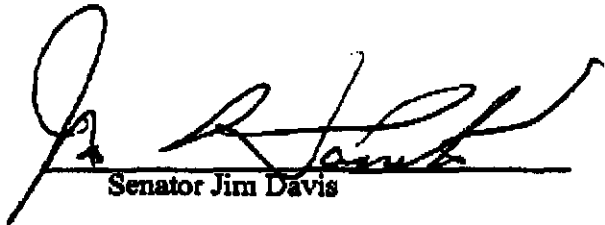

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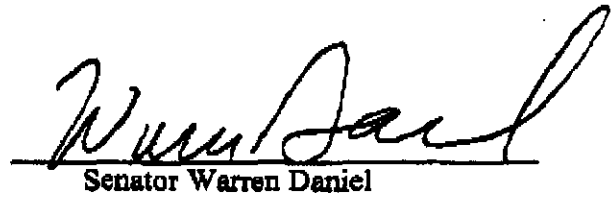

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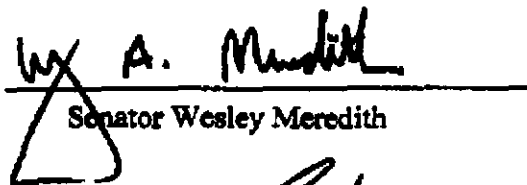
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